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Schubertiade IV

Music for Piano Four-Hands

Jiayan Sun,
Judith Gordon, and Yang Liu,
piano

with

Pianists of *MUS 901: Chamber Music*

Allison Ahern '21, Rose Evard '23,

Jenny Huo '20, Chenhui Jia '22,

Yena Li '21, Isabel Panciera '23,

Brianna Ray '23, Angela Yan '23, Tiffany Zhang '23

Thursday, December 5, 2019

8:00 PM

Sweeney Concert Hall, Sage Hall



SMITH COLLEGE

PROGRAM

Franz Schubert (1797–1828)

Deux Marches caractéristiques, op. post. 121,
D. 968b (1826)
No. 1 in C Major. Allegro vivace

Jiayan Sun, Yang Lin

Deutscher with Two Trios, D. 618 (1818)
Deutscher – Trio I –
Deutscher – Trio II – Deutscher – Coda

*Brianna Ray, Rose Evard
Tiffany Zhang, Brianna Ray*

Four Ländler, D. 814 (1824)
1–2. E-flat Major – A-flat Major
3–4. C Minor – C Major

*Jenny Huo, Tiffany Zhang
Allison Abern, Jenny Huo*

Two Ländler, D. 618 (1818)

Rose Evard, Allison Abern

Divertissement à la hongroise, op. 54, D. 818 (1824)
Andante – Un poco più mosso – Tempo I
Marcia. Andante con moto – Trio
Allegretto

Jiayan Sun, Judith Gordon

intermission

Please silence all cell phones and other electronic devices before the performance.

Fugue in E Minor, op. post. 152, D. 952 (1828) *Jiayan Sun, Judith Gordon*

Four Polonaises, op. 75, D. 599 (1818)

- | | |
|-----------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. D Minor | <i>Isabel Panciera, Chenhui Jia</i> |
| 2. B-flat Major | <i>Angela Yan, Isabel Panciera</i> |
| 3. E Major | <i>Yena Li, Angela Yan</i> |
| 4. F Major | <i>Chenhui Jia, Yena Li</i> |

Fantasie in F Minor, op. 103, D. 940 (1828) *Jiayan Sun, Yang Liu*

Allegro molto moderato – Largo – Allegro
vivace – Tempo primo

Deux Marches caractéristiques, op. post. 121, *Jiayan Sun, Yang Liu*

D. 968b (1826)

No. 2 in C Major. Allegro vivace

The Josten Performing Arts Library has created a LibGuide to facilitate access to
literature and resources on Schubert's life and work.

<http://libguides.smith.edu/schubertiade>

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The recorded performances from

A Beethoven Cycle: The Complete Piano Sonatas and Schubertiade

are available on Smith ScholarWorks.

https://scholarworks.smith.edu/mus_facper



A Schubert Evening at Josef von Spaun's, sepia drawing "From memory" by Moritz von Schwind (1804-1871), 1868
The drawing shows Schubert at the piano, with Johann Michael Vogl sitting next to him and surrounded by friends including Eduard von Baernfeld, Franz Grillparzer, Leopold Kupelwieser, Franz Lachner, Johann Mayrhofer, Wilhelm August Rieder, Franz von Schöber, Moritz von Schwind, and Josef von Spaun. The woman in the painting on the wall is Countess Karoline Esterházy.

NOTES ON THE PROGRAM

The first of the two C-Major *Marches caractéristiques*, **D. 968b**, which act as bookends to this concert, is reminiscent of the Allegro of the first movement of the “Great” C-Major Symphony, although there the rhythm is in triplets, while here, the groups of three fall as expected into the 6/8 meter. (The date of these marches is not known with certainty, but the year of that symphony, 1826, is a guess as good as any.) As in all good marches, this one is outfitted with a “trio” or contrasting middle section, here in A Minor, which slows down the action and lightens the texture. The second march—which will conclude this evening’s entertainment—is patterned and structured precisely like the first.

Four-hand music, you will have noticed, is both notes and choreography: the two players must sit in close proximity. Unless you’re Mike Pence, you can’t help touching your neighbor and appearing to your audience as his or her pal. In much of this repertory, the element of “fun” chimes in more than it does in standard two-hand fare. If there is sophistication or sublimity in these two marches—whose titles are in French, as are so many other musical titles at the time, in as much as French was the international language of Europe in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and publishers in particular hoped for international sales—it is, as always in Schubert, in his harmonic leaping, or wandering, off the beaten track.

The “Deutscher” (the generic term for the German dance) and the “Ländler” (a specific and especially common kind of Austro-Germanic dance) need no highfalutin explanations. It is in the *trios* of the Deutscher, you will notice, where the action takes place. The Ländler, each one no longer than a minute, are generally hassle-free. All of these pieces are regular in phrase structure, as dancing demands, and unassuming in harmonic and contrapuntal development. Like all music that is transparent—much of Mozart comes to mind—these dances, too, designed for domestic music-making, for social occasions among friends, are nonetheless challenging to perform: phrasing (the meaningful and directional linking of one note to the next) and graceful articulation (the nuanced manipulation of the attack and the release) are of the essence if the music is to rise to the level of art.

The Deutscher and Ländler and many of Schubert’s four-hand pieces were composed in Zseliz, about 150 miles east of Vienna. Schubert spent the summer and autumn of 1818 in that town, then in Hungary, now in Slovakia, serving as a tutor to the teenage daughters of the Esterházy family,

a family distantly related to the Esterházy's who had famously patronized Joseph Haydn for most of the earlier master's career. (He would return to Zseliz, for some six months, in 1824.) Like Haydn, Schubert was considered a respected servant in the Esterházy household. It seems that he was also not averse to enjoying the charms of some of the downstairs women. Indeed, the Schubert scholar Rita Steblin, who in many writings has attempted to debunk some modern scholars' hypotheses regarding Schubert's homosexuality, has identified one of Schubert's love-interests at the time as one Josepha Pöcklhofer, a woman with whom he had an affair that in the end disappointed him. The affair caused Schubert to "to bemoan a miserable reality" and, by means of music, to endeavor, as he said himself, to beautify it.

The *Divertissement à la hongroise*, in G Minor, **D. 818**, apparently composed in Zseliz in the spring of 1824, is a three-movement work (an opening Andante, which can be analyzed as an ABACA rondo whose interior episodes are divided into many repeated subsections; a short March, with a trio; and a lengthy Allegretto in a rondo form similar to that of the opening section) with a several times recurring motif that seems to unify the separate sections. The "Hungarian" elements here are the modal progressions, the cadenzas, the imitations of the Hungarian cimbalom, and the inclusion of various tunes that have been identified by the experts, including Csilla Pethö, who believes that the work's title of *Divertissement* takes away from its perfectly serious intentions: these, she suggests, would have been better captured by the use of the word *Fantaisie* (see below). In his catalogue of the works of Schubert, Otto Erich Deutsch reports that Schubert first heard the particular Hungarian melody that occurs in the final Allegretto of the *Divertissement*, when he was in Zseliz, as sung by a Hungarian scullery maid, in the kitchen of the Esterházy palace. Later in the century, Liszt and Brahms would bring Hungarian folk traditions into the "main stream of music," if I may be permitted to use an old-fashioned expression that today's musicology eschews, not without a *souçon* of sense, as chauvinistic, xenophobic, or worse.

The amazing little Fugue in E Minor, **D. 952**, which appears as a simplified stepchild of the F-sharp-Minor Fugue from Book I of Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier*, was presumably written in June 1828 as a challenge to Franz Lachner, with whom Schubert traveled to Baden, twenty miles south of Vienna, to test his new fugue on the organ there. As Eric Sams puts it,

the Schubert sounds “as if Bach had been given the freedom of Vienna.” What does that mean? Presumably, that there are oddities in the Schubert that the Leipziger Bach would have avoided. On the other hand, Schubert was working in a tonal-functional universe with tendencies and traditions by which Bach, a century earlier, was not troubled.

By Schubert’s time, the seventeenth-century Polish dance, the *Polonaise*, had become internationally popular, as its lasting French name makes clear. There were hundreds, perhaps thousands of *polonaises* available at the time, and Chopin, of course, the greatest Polish composer of them all, would raise the level of the discourse from courtly dance music to sophisticated and technically challenging concert music.

The *Four Polonaises*, **D. 599**, were composed in Zseliz, apparently in July 1818. They are identical in design, ABA, in triple meter, with the central “trio” usually representing a relaxation of the proceedings. The phraseology is almost always regular, in groupings of two and four bars, and the characteristic rhythm, with no upbeat—dum da-da dum dum dum dum [!]
—is present or suggested throughout. The order of the keys—D Minor, B-flat Major, E Major, F Major—suggests no particular design, no larger continuity, although the avoidance of “distant” keys with five or six accidentals is suggestive of the relaxed and congenial atmosphere in which Schubert intended this music to be performed. Schubert’s historical reputation was slow to develop, partly because some of his most important pieces were not published during his lifetime, partly because he lived in the shadow of Beethoven, and partly because he was first known for such comfortable music as this.

Tonight’s recital reaches a highpoint with what is Schubert’s most highly developed work for piano four-hands, the F-Minor *Fantaisie*, **D. 940**, from April 1828. Why *fantaisie* (the French word) rather than sonata? The sonata, to quote Su Yin Mak in a new book on Schubert’s late music, “was a learned genre premised on rigorous harmonic argument, logical thematic connection and normative formal expectations,” while “the fantasy favoured spontaneity over premeditation, strangeness over unity and singularity over convention.” To which I say *yes, but*. Because in reality, the masters also treated the sonata with great freedom, and the fantasy with great premeditation. Think of them sitting at their desks and slaving over the notes: did they in the one case sweat and swear, and in the other eat, drink, and be merry?

The F-Minor *Fantaisie* opens with a section, Allegro, that leads you to believe you are going to follow the sonata's "generic contract" of modulating to the dominant, but in fact the first section wavers, employs both F Minor and Major, goes here and there, but stays in F. The second section, Largo, begins with a wrench—to the distant key of F-sharp Minor (seven accidentals away), where we hear, first, a violent outburst, then, the sweetest little tune you ever heard. The third section, marked Allegro vivace, is a scherzo in F-sharp Minor, with a trio in D Major (although saying that hides what is a small miracle of harmonic invention). The scherzo returns and adds a link to take us back to F Minor and to a return of the music of the opening of the *Fantaisie*, that sad and sublime twenty-four-bar melody of the sort to which Schubert and Schubert alone had the key. A full-blown fugue follows—I have the feeling Bach would say of it "not too bad, my boy"—and then, one last time, the poignant opening theme. At dark moments such as this (in "Der Tod und das Mädchen," for example), Schubert sometimes closes the door in the major mode. If you listen closely, you can hear that he thought about doing that (the antepenultimate chord is momentarily major), but then determined to stay where he was.

Schubert dedicated the four-hand *Fantaisie* to Karoline Esterházy, his teenage pupil in Zseliz in 1818, a grown and beautiful woman in 1828. As a penniless commoner he could not hope to marry a wealthy aristocrat. But did he love her? Perhaps the answer to that question (as Richard Wagner said of the meaning of *Der Ring des Nibelungen!*) is in the music.

—Peter Bloom
Grace Jarcho Ross 1933 Professor of Humanities, Emeritus

Pianist **Judith Gordon** gave her New York recital debut at the Metropolitan Museum of Art ‘Introductions’ series. She has explored diverse repertory as soloist with groups that include the Boston Pops Orchestra, Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, Symphony New Hampshire, and the Boston Modern Orchestra Project, and with an unusually wide range of smaller ensembles and solo artists. A member of the Smith College music faculty since 2006, she is a returning guest-artist at the Bard, Bennington, and Charlottesville chamber music festivals, at Serenata Santa Fe and ChatterABQ in New Mexico, the Dilijan Series in Los Angeles, and in Washington County, New York, where she is a consulting director of Music from Salem. Gordon graduated from the New England Conservatory of Music, where she received an Outstanding Alumni Award in 2009.

Pianist **Yang Liu** attracts worldwide audiences with her profound musicianship and extraordinary virtuosity. “Her performance was incredibly expressive... effortlessly moving from delicate flourishes to pounding intensity” (*Toronto Star*). Since her concerto debut at the age of fourteen with the Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra, she has performed extensively throughout the US, Europe, and China, at many prominent venues.

Ms. Liu has won many prestigious competitions, including first prize at the Toronto International Piano Competition, second prize at the Serge & Olga Koussevitzky Young Artist Awards, among others. She received the Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees from The Juilliard School, and the Master of Musical Arts degree from Yale School of Music. She is currently pursuing the Doctor of Musical Arts degree at The Peabody Institute of The Johns Hopkins University, where she served as a teaching assistant for the department of keyboard studies. She is an adjunct faculty member at Smith College.

Praised by the *New York Times* for his “revelatory” performances, pianist **Jiayan Sun** has performed with the Cleveland Orchestra, the Hallé Orchestra, the Chinese and RTÉ National Symphony Orchestras, the Fort Worth and Toledo Symphony Orchestras, the Toronto and Aspen Concert Orchestras, and the Suwon Philharmonic Orchestra.

In addition to capturing major prizes at the Leeds, Cleveland, Dublin, and Toronto international piano competitions, playing early keyboard instruments and studying historical performance practice have played a significant role in his musical activities, with critically acclaimed appearances with the American Classical Orchestra in Alice Tully Hall.

Hailing from Yantai, China, he received the Doctor of Musical Arts degree from The Juilliard School under the tutelage of Yoheved Kaplinsky and Stephen Hough. He is the Iva Dee Hiatt Visiting Artist in Piano at Smith College.

Since last year, in addition to small mixed ensembles, *MUS 901: Chamber Music* has included a dedicated section for piano students to play together. The nine pianists in the class this semester present themselves with the following haiku:

Life with music is
Joyous - meticulous and
Endearing wonder

Allison Ahern '21, Biology | Minneapolis, MN

The world is silent;
My head is full of music,
I'm never alone.

Rose Evard '23, Biology | Concord, MA

ephemeral bliss
inter- and extra- react
music shelters you

Jenny Huo '20, Biochemistry/Philosophy | Seattle, WA

Stay inside, travel
Many miles. It's like magic,
But it is music.

Chenhui Jia '22, Music/Computer Science | Beijing, China

A bunny without
Ears, eyes, limbs, fur and heart, is
Me without music.

Yena Li '21, Psychology | Shenzhen, China

My thoughts will never
translate perfectly into
language, or music.

Isabel Panciera '23 | St. Peter, MN

Music is a Joke
that laughs with and understands
you - like a good friend.

Brianna Ray '23, Environmental Science and Policy | Wichita, KS

I, too, have a mixed
Feeling about the five flats
on my sheet music.

Angela Yan '23 | Shanghai, China

Music is essential in
this world. It's everywhere
around us, and gives us joy.

Tiffany Zhang '23, (Early Child Education) | New York, NY

*

ephemeral, joke,
bunny, magic, flats, wonder –
Music Includes All.

JG/YL/JS

Schubertiade

Jiayan Sun, piano

Eight Recitals at 8 PM on Thursdays

Sweeney Concert Hall, Sage Hall

Free and open to the public

I. September 12, 2019

Piano Sonatas 1: C Major, D. 840;

G Major, D. 894; C Minor, D. 958

II. September 26, 2019

Four Impromptus for Piano, D. 899;

Piano Trio in E-flat Major, D. 929

with **Joel Pitchon**, violin &
Marie-Volcy Pelletier, cello

III. October 24, 2019

Piano Sonatas 2: E Minor, D. 566;

A Minor, D. 845; A Major, D. 959

IV. December 5, 2019

Music for Piano Four-Hands

with **Judith Gordon** and
Smith student pianists

V. February 6, 2020

The *Schwanengesang* Poets:

Reilstab, Heine, and Seidl

with **William Hite**, tenor

VI. February 27, 2020

Four Impromptus for Piano,

D. 935; Piano Trio in B-flat
Major, D. 898

with **Joel Pitchon**, violin &
Marie-Volcy Pelletier, cello

VII. April 2, 2020

Piano Music for Two-Hands and
Four-Hands

with **Monica Jakuc Leverett**,
Graf Fortepiano

VIII. April 16, 2020

Piano Sonatas 3: F-sharp Minor,

D. 571; D Major, D. 850; B-flat
Major, D. 960

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